

SALT SPRING ISLAND

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINDINGS



Better
at **Home**

**United Way helping seniors
remain independent.**

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for the United Way of the Lower Mainland



United Way

This report represents a summary of the community development activities
for Better at Home on

Salt Spring Island, BC

January 2014

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Acknowledgements

We first and foremost want to thank the many seniors and senior service providers who participated for their willingness to share their stories and concerns with us. Many people expressed their hopes for this program's potential to address urgent needs in the community. We met many people who were aging in place with great dignity and good humour.

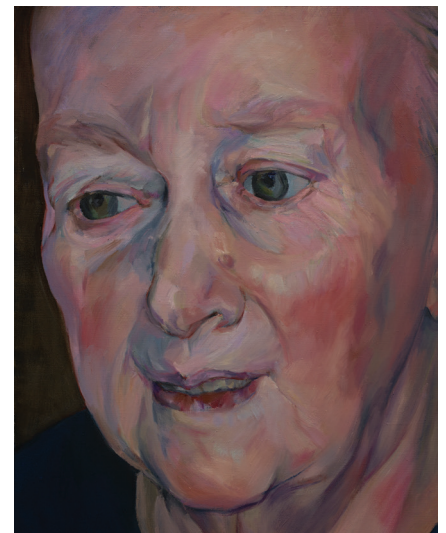
We hope that this report will reflect back to our community the many strengths and deep commitments that allow residents to care for one another, and to be cared for. We have exposed vulnerabilities—not as indictments of current service providers, but in order to find ways to extend and bolster existing circles of support.

Thank you to the provincial support team at the United Way of the Lower Mainland. Jody Olsson was a knowledgeable and unflaggingly supportive field coordinator.

Thank you to artist Susan Benson for permission to reproduce her portraits in this report and at our Community Meeting.

We believe that community members are experts in understanding their own lives, and that locally designed solutions that emerge from listening to those with experiential knowledge are generally the most successful and cost effective. We applaud United Way for supporting community developers to engage the community, in order to tailor the Better at Home program to meet the unique needs and visions of the Salt Spring Island community.

We hope that this report helps to guide the successful evolution of the Better At Home program on Salt Spring Island, and fosters a greater spirit of cooperation amongst those serving seniors in our community.

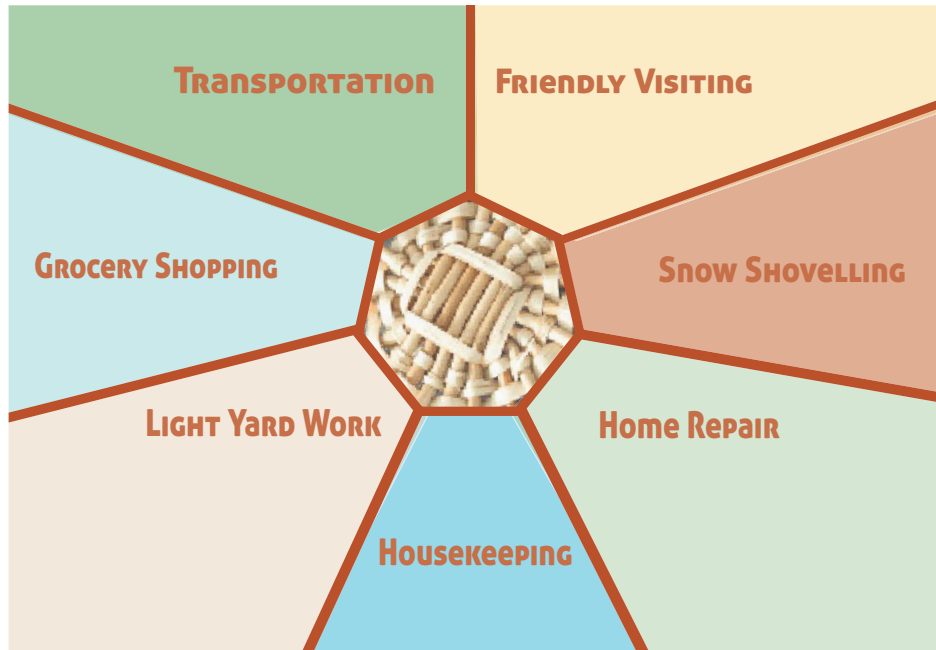


Introduction

1.1 Better at Home Program Introduction

Better at Home is a program that helps seniors with simple day-to-day tasks so that they can carry on living independently in their own homes and remain connected to their communities.

The program is funded by the Government of British Columbia and managed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland, with services delivered by a local non-profit organization.



The Better at Home program is designed to address the specific needs of local seniors, allowing communities to choose from the following basket of services:

- friendly visiting • transportation to appointments • snow shoveling • light yard work
- simple home repairs • grocery shopping • light housekeeping

Salt Spring Island has been identified as a Better at Home site. Ellie Langford Parks was contracted as community developer to assess community readiness, identify seniors' assets, needs and priorities in regards to the basket of services, and help identify which community organization would be best suited to be the lead agency in delivering the Better at Home program. This report reflects the findings of the community research process. It will be used by the lead organization to design an appropriate local Better at Home program in response to community needs and priorities.

1.2 Community Developer Profile

Ellie Langford Parks and Andrea Palframan worked together to complete the community development engagement process. As local residents and consultants not engaged in the day-to-day senior social services provision, they brought a non-biased and fresh perspective to the foundational stage of the island's Better at Home initiative.



Ellie Langford Parks M.Ed

Ellie is an experienced community developer, educator and program manager. Her professional positions include currently Director of Special Program Development for Leadership Victoria, and Instructor in the Master of Arts in Community Development program at UVIC, and formerly the BC/ Yukon Coordinator for the Canadian Community Economic Development Network. Ellie has lived on Salt Spring Island for 18 years and is involved with diverse sectors of the local community. She has served on the board of a person living with a progressive illness since 2003, an experience which has given her insight into the options and challenges facing island seniors.

Andrea Palframan M. Comm

Andrea's background in community development involves working with Glasswaters Foundation as a program manager, carrying out participatory research to inform community based health and education programs in Africa. She has also sat on the board of SOLID and worked with numerous community non-profits as a graphic designer. Her Salt Spring network dates back to 1997, with extensive island experience in fundraising and public education campaigns.

1.3 Description of the local community development approach

The community development approach we applied in this process focused on gathering both qualitative and quantitative information from a wide range of participants, with the aim of creating an accurate picture of the realities of Salt Spring seniors.

Through the media, attendance at public meetings, and setting up kiosks in public spaces we communicated the aims and methodologies of the Better at Home process throughout the community. We outlined the Better at Home program, and solicited participation from stakeholders and seniors in the community development process. Aware that there are many challenges and needs relating to health care services on the island, we chose to keep our study sharply focussed on the program's non-medical home services parameters.

In surveys, focus groups, interviews and meetings, we asked seniors and family members:

- to identify which non-medical services they were aware of locally,
- whether these services were meeting their needs, and
- which places and people they relied on for support.

We asked the same questions of community stakeholders, from service clubs to social service agencies. At the same time, we solicited participants' criteria for a lead agency who could successfully implement the program at the conclusion of the consultation process.

We did not simply drop off surveys and collect filled forms. We were present at the beginning and end of the process to answer questions, and in most instances sat with respondents as they completed their surveys. By asking questions, actively listening and making time for two-way communication, we received rich data, both relating to the challenges seniors face and to their strength and resilience.



Activities:

1. Literature review – Information was gathered from a spectrum of sources to gain an understanding of Salt Spring Island’s senior population. Sources included:
 - Community Directory, Salt Spring Island Community Services (SSICS)
 - Health Related Resources for Seniors, Community Wellness Program
 - Island Health Report 2018, Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA)
 - Salt Spring Island Health Review 2010, VIHA
 - Statistics Canada Census Data, 2011
 - Volunteer Salt Spring Online Directory, SSICS
 - Salt Spring Community Directory, Lions Club
 - Enhancing Social Support for Seniors Living in B.C., CCPA Fact Sheet
 - Local Health Area Profile 2012, Gulf Islands
 - Seniors Housing Strategy 2010, Islands Trust.
2. Profile of the Community Wellness Program — Met with stakeholders involved in funding and administering local program providing Friendly Visitors and Peer Counselling to seniors; gathered data and qualitative feedback from program leader and volunteers
3. Focus Groups – Met with residents and members of Brinkworthy and Salt Spring Island Seniors Society to discuss program aims and solicit feedback on needs and priorities
4. Presentations to Boards of Director – Lions Club, Salt Spring Seniors Society
5. Interviews – Interviews were conducted with seniors, family members, volunteers and professionals from a range of disciplines including health providers, social service agencies and local activity clubs.
6. Surveys- Outreach was conducted with numerous island seniors organizations, community service clubs, and non-profits involved with seniors. The purpose was to introduce the Better at Home program and solicit feedback and expertise from participants. Rather than simply ‘drop off’ the surveys and collect them at a later date, the majority of surveys involved guided discussions with the community developers who were present to answer questions and engage in dialogue with respondents.
7. Community Meeting — Public forum held to present preliminary findings from surveys, interviews, and focus groups and to solicit further feedback within a facilitated group process
8. Stakeholder’s Meeting —Follow-up to Community Meeting with key stakeholders and potential lead organization(s) to recommend a lead organization and identify Better at Home program approach on Salt Spring Island, reviewing potential challenges and making recommendations among knowledgeable community resource people.



The information that follows was gathered from Salt Spring individuals and organizations. The local community developers approached this project as learners, seeking out both current research and consulting with seniors, caregivers and family members whose personal experience of navigating a path to 'aging in place' brought great expertise and knowledge.

By actively listening to a multitude of voices, we set out to identify the local assets that would support a successful implementation of the Better at Home Program. By bringing diverse stakeholders together, we facilitated a community discussion about seniors services; what is currently working, what areas need investment and energy, and what needs were expressed that have yet to be met.

Activity	Number of Participants
Survey (online & in-person)	141
Focus Groups (three)	42
Meeting with Key Stakeholders	20
Public Presentations	30
Community Meeting	50

Figure 1.1: Activities Profile.

2. Community Profile

Salt Spring is the largest (182 km²) and has the highest population of the Gulf Islands. There are three villages; Fulford, Vesuvius and Ganges. Ganges, the largest centre is located mid island on the waterfront. Ganges has an abundance of services, pharmacies, banks and a public library. A series of pathways system connect the downtown core with the hospital, grocery stores, Seniors Society, and some of the assisted living and extended care facilities.



Salt Spring Island is well known for its abundance of artists. The Saturday Market is a long running farmers and craft market and is a well known tourist attraction. Islanders are highly involved in social, charitable and political activities making for a animated mix. Folk legend Valdy a local resident, has quipped "Salt Spring is a difference of opinion,

surrounded by water". There are an abundance of non profit societies and informal groups devoted to environmental and humanitarian efforts. There are three elementary schools, a middle school and a high school. Many different churches, a Buddhist Monastery and a focus on health and wellness contribute to a vibrant community spirit.



The majority of the population lives in rural and semi rural lots. The island has 650 kilometres of rural roads, most without streetlights and many areas are isolated without bus service. While on Island, transportation options include taxis, flights to Vancouver Harbour or Airport, water taxis between the islands, and five BC Transit bus routes connected to Ganges. The majority of residents own a vehicle. Busses typically run during the day, from about 7:00am to 6:00pm. BC Ferries provides multiple runs ferry trips to Vancouver Island and the mainland of BC from three ferry terminals, Fulford Harbour, Vesuvius, and Long Harbour. The increasing cost of travel off island is a concern for islands, both for locals and tourists. Until 2013, seniors travelled on inter-island ferries for free as foot passengers on weekdays with a Gold BC Care Card; effective April 1, 2014 the Monday to Thursday program will be terminated and seniors will be charged the discounted fare for all ferry travel.



The warm weather, natural beauty and vibrant community life has attracted many retirees. During the summer months the populations swells to nearly 20,000 thanks to tourists and vacation home owners. These visitors place an added burden on island services but bring an injection of revenue to many island businesses who cater to seasonal crowds.

There is an ongoing lack of affordable housing on the island, coupled with an increased cost of living— both are in part due to transportation costs. Many working-age islanders have multiple part-time jobs and often will supplement with self employment or rental income. The high turnover within the ranks of seniors caregivers is partly attributable to the island's chronic lack of affordable, long-term housing for residents with lower paying jobs.



The majority of homes are single family structures. Many homes rely on wood heat and wood chopping, stacking and carrying can be a challenge to island seniors. In Ganges, there are multiple condo and multi unit complexes. There are eight housing facilities for seniors, including seniors affordable living residences, assisted living, long-term care and retirement villages.

Salt Spring Island is located in Local Health Area 64, Gulf Islands. LadyMinto Hospital opened in 1958, currently has 19 acute care beds and 31 VIHA funded beds in the Extended Care Unit. Surgery, dialysis and radiation services are all off island. Accessing medical services in Victoria, Duncan, and



Vancouver is an increasing challenge. Although medical services plan covers the cost of ferry travel for necessary appointments, seniors without spouses and those who do not drive rely on a pool of volunteer drivers to accompany them on journeys to off-island hospitals and clinics.

2.1. Description of the local seniors' population

In general Salt Spring Island's population is older and healthier than many other areas in BC. According to the Statistics Canada Census data (2011), there are 2585 people aged 65 or older living on Salt Spring Island. This makes up 25.3 % of the total population of 10,234.

Seniors represent the fastest growing age groups on Salt Spring Island. The population of the Gulf Islands is expected to grow by 31.4% by 2030, while the population over the age of 75 is expected to grow 156% in that same period.

In the 2010 Salt Spring Island health review it was noted that the demographics of Salt Spring Island are changing and are increasingly weighted towards a predominantly senior population. Both the preference for aging in place and the ongoing in-migration of retirees in the 55- 64 age cohort are the key drivers of this population shift.

Statistics Canada Census data (2011) reported the median age is 53.2 compared to a provincial average of 41.9. Also the population has a high degree of good health, with 21% lower mortality than VIHA overall.

Our senior respondents were 6% 55-65; 39% 66-75, 39% 76-85, and 17% 86-95. The median age was 77.

Life Style and living arrangements:

According the Statistics Canada Census data (2011), 2,415 seniors live independently in the community. Persons aged 65 and over that are not in census families and are living alone Gulf Islands (29.5%) BC (27.3%) VIHA (29.2%) Our survey data showed 45% of our senior respondents lived alone while 47% lived with a spouse, and 8% lived with another person or family member.

As people age, their needs change due to disabilities, medical conditions and/or changes in their financial situation. Aging population require various forms of housing, a range of models of coordinating housing with support services, and community planning that respond to the needs of seniors and enhance their quality of life.

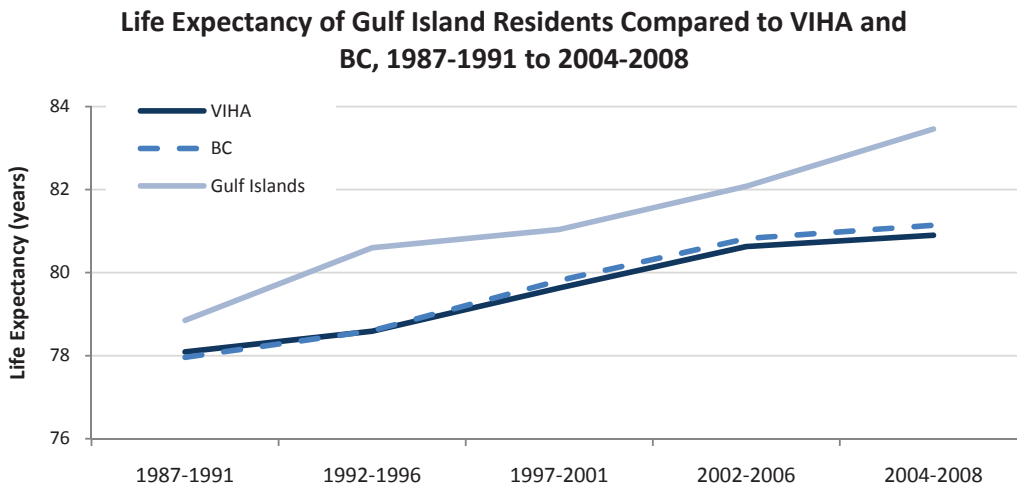
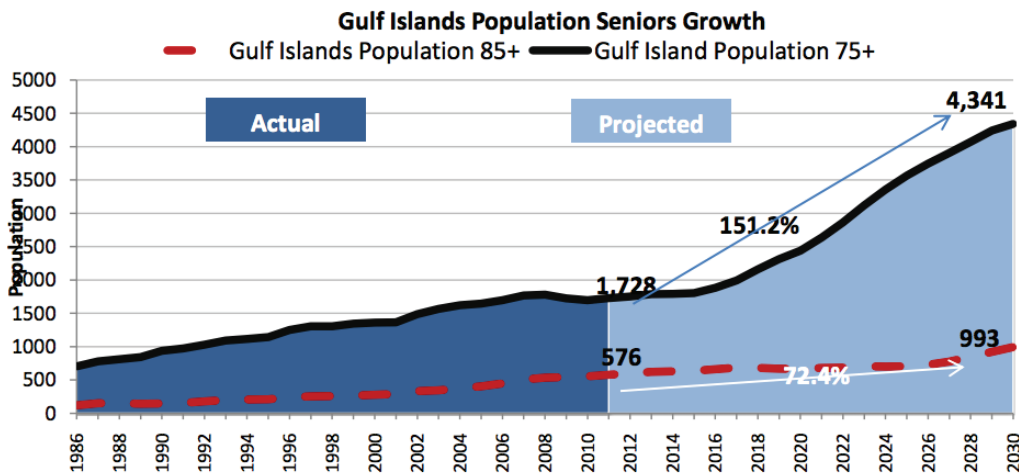
The elderly dependency ratio is high and increasing (fewer youngerpeople to older people). This leads to challenges in hiring and retaining staff. The report noted the increase in senior needs, the need for home support services, including in-home personal services such as bathing, meals, and laundry, has been increasing steadily over the past few years. From March 2008 to March 2009, the number of home support hours provided increased by almost 43%, while the number of clients increased over 22%.



Demographics

Total population 10,234, of which 2585 are 65+

Age Group	Population
55-59	1060
60-65	1145
65-69	875
70-75	530
76-79	400
80-85	390
86+	39



Source: BC Statistics



2.2. Summary of the community assets



Map of Salt Spring Island Seniors Assets

The above Asset map shows the various seniors-related service providers and agencies. Overlapping elements indicate partnerships and programs that operate in tandem. For instance, the Lions Club,



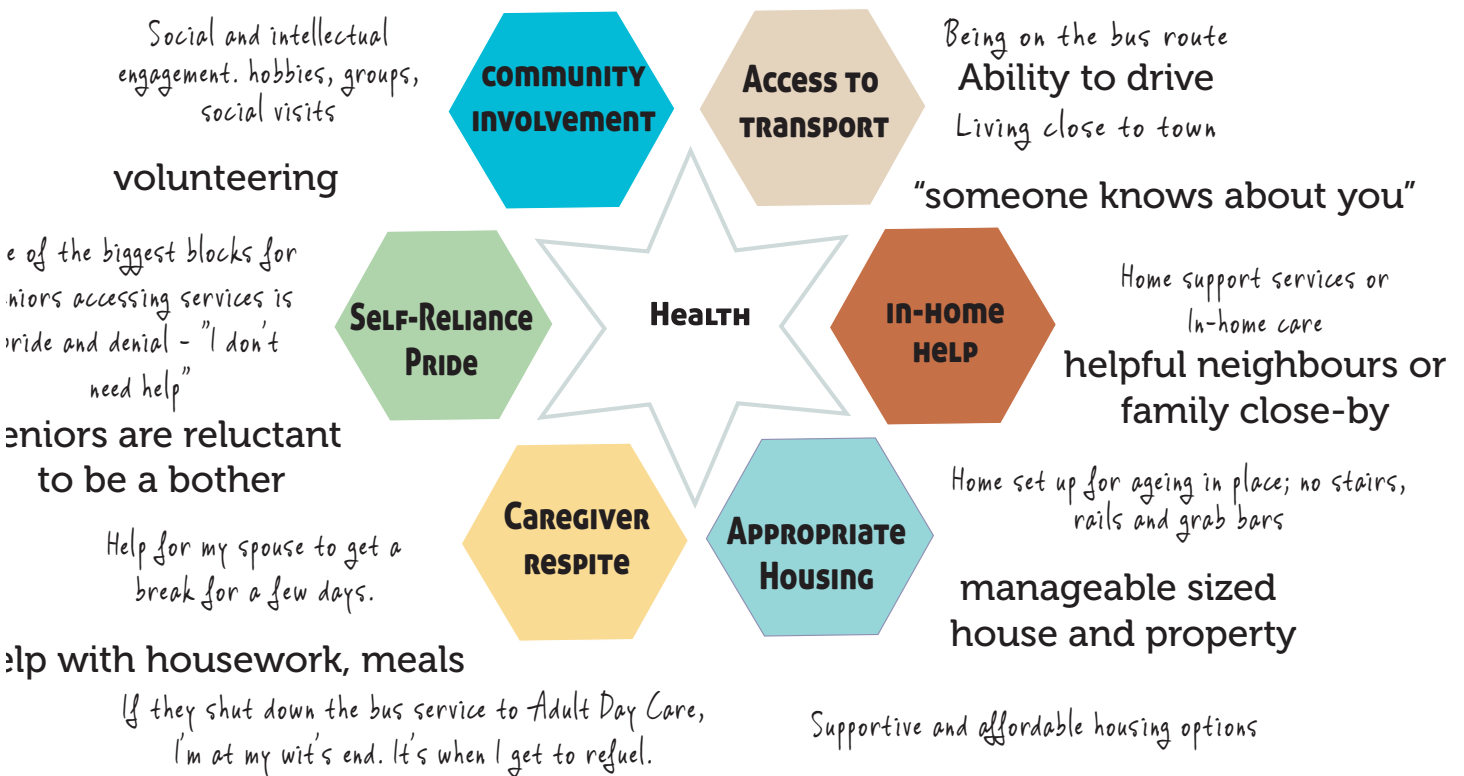
Salt Spring Seniors Services Society, the Rotary Club and the Royal Canadian Legion jointly operate the Croftonbrook Seniors Residence, while the Community Wellness Program is run as an alliance between Salt Spring Island Community Services, Lady Minto Hospital, Gulf Islands Seniors Residence Association (Meadowbrook), and Salt Spring Seniors Society. Greenwoods and Salt Spring Island Community Services each operate programs which conduct community outreach, including the Community Bathing Program, Meals on Wheels, Volunteer Salt Spring and Mental Health Outreach programs.

The Salt Spring Island Emergency Program’s POD system is a responsive attempt to harness and coordinate micro-regional ‘pods’ on the island. By training and engaging voluntary leaders in each district to respond to emergencies and refer vulnerable residents to health and community services, the POD system builds on informal social and geographic networks. POD leaders are used to communicate necessary information to the community, for instance during a boil-water advisory. POD leaders are tasked with inventorying elderly and infirm community members, and coordinating with Salt Spring Search & Rescue to provide supplies or move the resident to safety during storms or natural disasters.

2.3. Seniors needs related to non-medical home support services

Question ONE: What are the main factors that keep island seniors living longer at home?

WHAT FACTORS KEEP SENIORS LIVING AT HOME LONGER?



The main factor seniors reported upon which kept them in their own homes, longer, was good health. Beyond that, factors included access to appropriate housing for aging in place, respite for caregivers with dependent spouses or family members, in-home services and support, access to transportation, having an involvement with the community through volunteering or participation in activities, and a disposition towards self-reliance and pride. It was acknowledged by some that not everyone is better off at home, and that the emphasis on remaining home longer could drive some people to remain in unsafe or poorly supported living conditions.

Question TWO: What services and programs are currently offered that help Salt Spring seniors live longer at home. Who provides them?

Services	Providers	Number of Responses
Seniors Activities	Salt Spring Seniors Society, Old Age Pensioners	21
Home Support	Greenwoods, Beacon Community Services	18
Shopping Service	Thriftys	12
Meals on Wheels	VIHA/Beacon Community Services, Private	11
Seniors Drivers	Salt Spring Seniors Society	10
Friendly Visitors	Community Wellness Programs	9
Don't Know	N.A.	9
Assisted Living	Meadowbrook, Heritage Place	5
Adult Day Program	Greenwoods/Braehaven	5
Private Housekeeping	Various	4
Public Bus	BC Transit	4
Wheelchair Van	Lions Club	4

Question THREE: Are the services you listed above accessible? Why or why not?

Yes: 86 •No: 27 •Maybe/Don't Know: 9

Of those who said the services were not accessible, the following were reasons 'why not':

Many of the comments in this section revealed that seniors were well aware of the shortcomings of the current system and had given thought to ways of reaching those who were not able to access services. These comments included such statements as:



“Need coordinated access: one call for resources”

“VIHA’s centralized model is missing the point of local knowledge leadership”

“No alternative for wheelchair bound seniors who can’t access public bus, taxis are not able to bring wheelchairs or scooters.”

“Cost of Meals on Wheels \$6 per meal, mandated by VIHA. Not a sliding scale, not means tested. Not able to pay; caregivers can’t be involved in meal preparation so they don’t refer.”

“South end seniors can feel cut off from Ganges activities, especially night time activities.”

“Even a list of reliable people available on a regular basis would help. I don’t mean a free service but there are lots of things one can no longer do due to age or health . When you can’t find someone good and reasonable things pile up. It is a sad feeling for us who once could manage on our own.”

Reason	Number of Responses
Affordability	14
Lack of Access (Transport)	13
Poor Coordination	5
Lack of Knowledge About Services	5
Seniors too Proud to Ask for Help	4
Not enough Volunteers	3
Limited Program Resources	2

Question FOUR: What non-medical home support services from the Better at Home basket of services are needed on Salt Spring?

Service	Number of Responses
Transportation to Appointments	106
Light Housekeeping	98
Light Yard Work	83
Simple Home Repairs	79
Grocery Shopping	70
Friendly Visiting	63
Snow Shoveling	45

Question FIVE: Are there non-medical supports not listed that are needed on Salt Spring?

Suggestions included: Income tax support, advance-care planning, help downsizing/moving to more appropriate housing, streetlights.

Several respondents cited need for services that already exist, i.e. Sendial Grocery Delivery. This highlights the need for better communication/outreach/co-ordination.



Popular Ideas	Number of Responses
Friendly Excursions/Visits out of the Home	11
Wood Chopping & Stacking	9
Pet Care	9
Transport to Social Engagements	7
Counseling	6
Computer Help	4
Library Books	4
Gardening	4
Transport to Off-Island Appointments	4
Daily Phone Call	3

2.4. Suggested opportunities for service integration/coordination

Transportation assets — Many seniors activities happen weekly and yet are not always accessible to seniors living in outside the Ganges core. Increased coordination of existing assets—both drivers and vehicles—between agencies would allow underserved areas and underutilized resources to be matched. Examples include the use of volunteer drivers with the Salt Spring Seniors Society’s drivers program in the Lions Club wheelchair van program, the use of the Greenwoods van to collect remote seniors for the Adult Day Program, and the use of the Salt Spring Island Community Services vans for Better at Home participants to access activity programs and medical appointments to relieve pressures on the Salt Spring Seniors Services Society Driving Program.

Volunteer coordination — Various groups have training programs for volunteers, such as Salt Spring Island Hospice and Community Wellness Friendly Visitors. Through Better at Home, groups of trained volunteers could be pooled, extending training capacity and ensuring better utilization with less burnout. Volunteer Salt Spring has a good database of volunteer opportunities but it remains static: using modern social media such as Facebook and the Salt Spring Community List could promote volunteer opportunities, while holding volunteer fairs is another way to bring younger people to the mix. The need to incentivize, recognize, and retain volunteers is critical.

Training — Using today’s pool of skilled yet elderly community helpers to pass on their skills to tomorrows helpers is an opportunity that should not be missed. Succession planning for key roles could be a major contribution of Better at Home to coordination of volunteer driven services. As well, with the changing face of volunteering, seeing more and more people shift from weekly commitments to volunteering for skilled work or specific activities, means there is a need for role re-definition focussed on utilizing the skills of retirees. The POD system has the potential to formalize some of the neighbour-to-neighbour networks which are both an asset and because of their lack of coordination , a vulnerability in the community.

Facilities use — The need for centralized referrals to services and information was cited repeatedly in our study. Many recommended a central office or kiosk where family members, caregivers and elders could access a single point of entry to the many services that may be underutilized due to poor visibility. The Public Library, Seniors Services Society and the Lions Hall are all located within the town centre and could provide such a hub for knowledge and referrals.



“The best it ever was during our harsh winter, when everything shut down. Then we coordinated with private trucks, emergency services, and neighbours. We took groceries and supplies into vulnerable seniors, with the help of POD leaders and volunteers. After a natural disaster, you always hear people say... now we know how strong we are.”—Catherine Bennett, Meals on Wheels

3. Community Readiness

3.1. Explanation of community readiness that reflects community consultations

Salt Spring has an ethos of community service and many active retirees, able and willing to volunteer. Many excellent existing programs rely on volunteer coordination and management. Volunteer Salt Spring, an initiative of Salt Spring Island Community Services, maintains an online database of volunteer opportunities. Salt Spring Senior Services Society has a centrally located building which operates as a seniors activity centre. The increasing numbers of seniors now requires these programs to upgrade their management structure and administrative capacity.

As can be seen in the Asset Map, there is currently a comprehensive list of services on Salt Spring that will be reinforced by the Better at Home services. A major concern that came forward at both the community consultation and in the surveys was the lack of coordination of access existing services. This manifested mainly in poorly coordinated or under-resourced transportation services.

Also noted was a desire for information about trained and reliable in home support services (private home care, maintenance and repair, housekeepers) both for seniors and their family members. The challenges are mainly a consequence not of resource shortfall but of lack of a coordinated hub from which these concentric circles of support could communicate their offerings, and needs.

Another opportunity exists for communication and collaboration between senior serving organizations. The lead organization could undertake to be the convenor of the local service providers in order to increase information and resources sharing to provide the best possible services.

During the community development process it was clear that there is a strong dedication, caring and concern for Salt Spring’s seniors and a willingness to work together to provide these services.

3.2. Potential risks going forward

Potential risks going forward include concerns about:

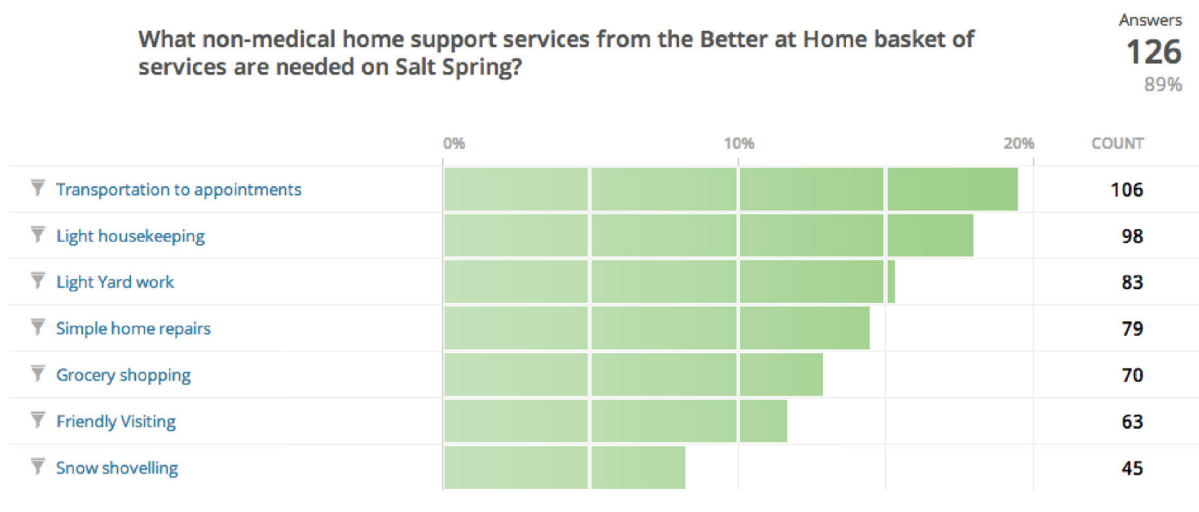
- Long term sustainability of program, and then not being able to sustain them if funding should end or there is a change in the Provincial Government’s priorities
- Lack of volunteers to be able to sustain the services
- Competition and lack of information flow between senior serving agencies
- Volunteers replacing paid workers
- Lead organization’s inexperience in meeting specialized needs of seniors and broad diversification of their programming could dilute impact of BAH
- Capacity of program to serve the increasing need



- Comprehensive volunteer training and supervision is needed as well as proper screening to ensure the safety and privacy of seniors
- Need for dedicated, accessible, private office space for Better at Home program
- Increasing level of complexity of cases with increase in cognitive impairment means staffing requirements are becoming more onerous
- Lack of training and professional oversight of private in home service providers
- Changes to Community Wellness program could lead to dissipation of some assets i.e. trained volunteers, relationships fostered by long term, well respected Community Wellness coordinator
- Difficulty of reaching isolated and vulnerable seniors and those who are resistant to the idea that need help

4. Local Better at Home Program Details

4.1. List of preferred services from the Better at Home basket of services that reflect community consultations; linkages to the identified needs



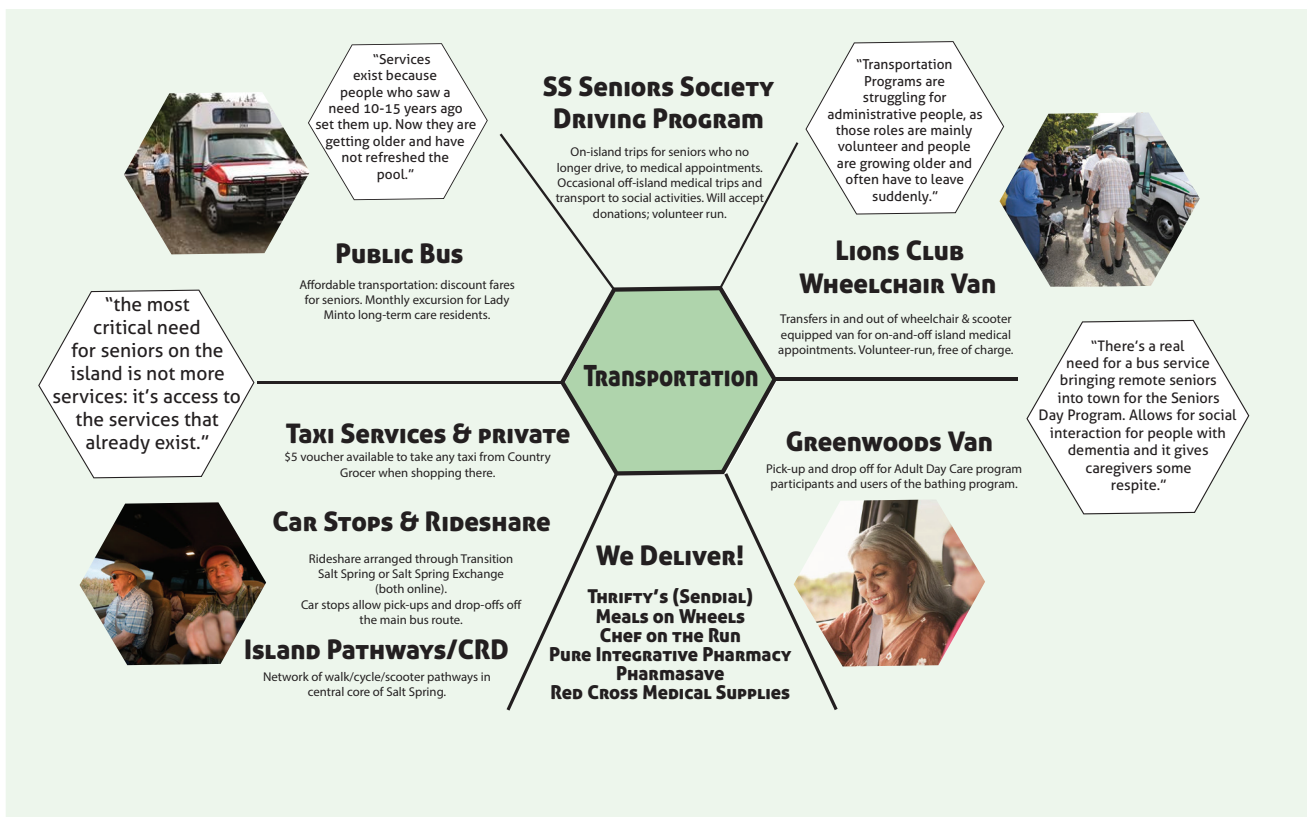
Transportation to Appointments 75%

Transportation was the main need cited by respondents (126 of 141 respondents selected transportation as a 'needed' service). Although seniors make up a significant proportion of the population, there are limited transportation options for them to access health care services on Salt Spring Island, and fewer to assist with accessing off-island health services. Salt Spring busses are wheelchair accessible.

Many people would welcome a Handy Dart service on Salt Spring to help seniors be more independent and mobile. Furthermore, while the Travel Assistance Program (operated by the Province) reimburses patients for travel costs associated with accessing some health care services in other communities, it does not reimburse patients who travel to physiotherapy services.



The Lions Club and Seniors Services Society both offer volunteer driving services. The Lions Club operates a wheelchair and scooter access van which travels up to five days a week to bring disabled passengers to medical appointments. The program is volunteer run, with a single volunteer carrying out the wheelchair-to-vehicle transfers and driving. The Salt Spring Seniors Services Society engages a voluntary coordinator who acts as a dispatcher, connecting seniors needing rides to medical appointments with willing drivers. This program is facing volunteer shortages as the existing pool ages and fewer new volunteers are engaged.



Transportation Asset Map

Home-Based Services

There were commonalities between three of the Basket of Services offered by Better at Home and identified as priorities by island seniors. These included light housekeeping, light yard work, and simple home repairs. At present, these services are offered one week per year by a volunteer Youth Team which is engaged by the Community Gospel Church. Aside from that service, home based services are provided by private landscaping, housekeeping and property maintenance contractors who are not coordinated by any local agency. It is up to seniors to connect with these services on their own, leaving them vulnerable to un-insured, poorly vetted and non-senior competent suppliers. The need for centralized referrals to services was cited as a major need.

Light Housekeeping: 69%

For seniors receiving Home Support Services from Beacon Community Services, caregivers are limited as to the housekeeping they can do. Professional cleaning services are available on island for



those who can afford it, with rates averaging \$20 per hour.

Light Yard Work 58%

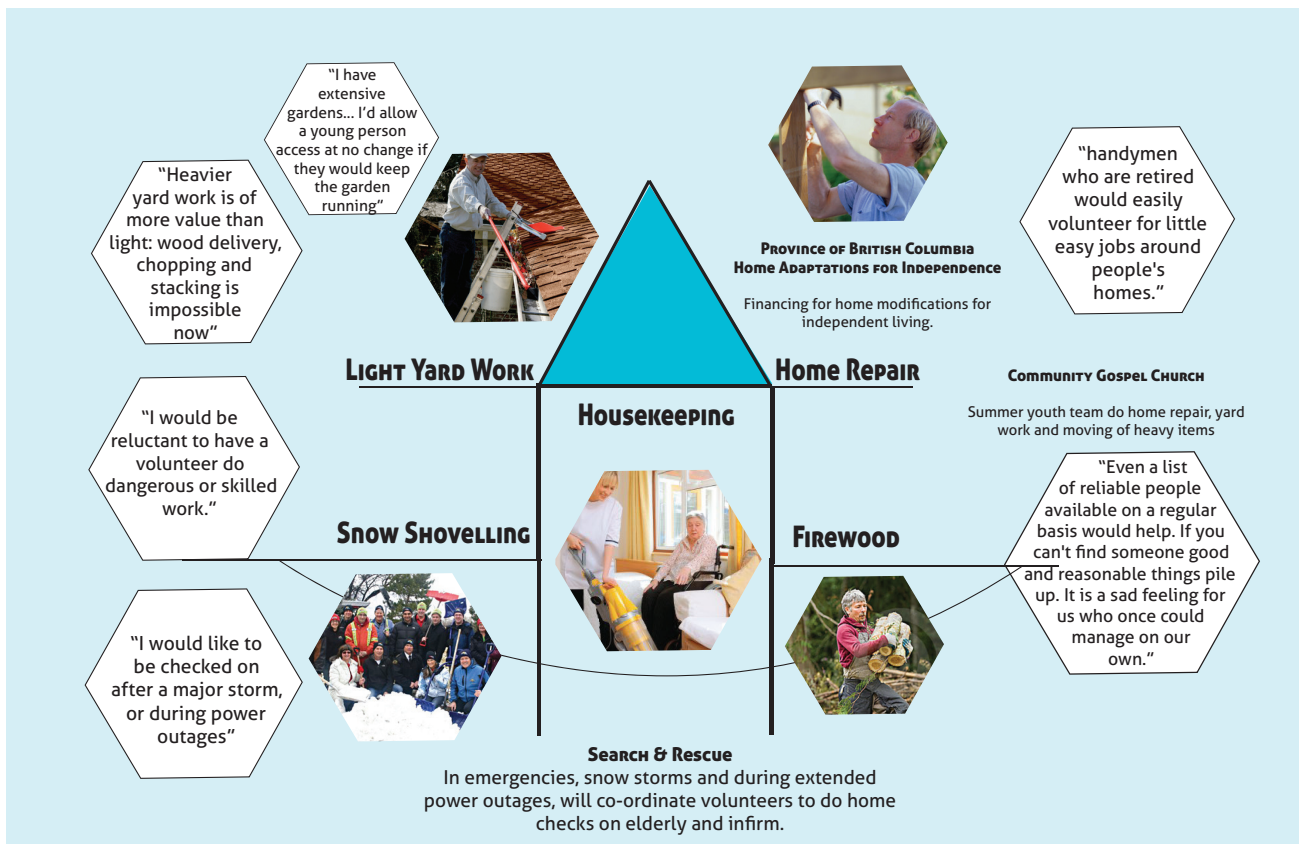
Most islands live in single family homes, often on acreages, with gardens. The favourable climate and widespread interest in local food production and gardening, means many homes have extensive gardens. Seniors who can afford to do so, and can connect with reliable help, engage local contractors to keep fences mended and gardens tended.

Simple Home Repairs 56%

Most homes are single family dwellings. Maintenance and upkeep is an ongoing issue that becomes more difficult as homeowners and their homes age. Some assistance is available through Home Adaptations for Independence, a Province of B.C. initiative, and the Islands Trust has identified that investing in existing housing to help elders age in place is a key priority in their Seniors Housing Strategy.

Snow Shovelling/Wood Chopping 31%

Limited need for snow shovelling as snow is infrequent on island, but when it does snow, people can become housebound as secondary rural roads are not ploughed promptly. Many seniors require assistance with wood chopping, stacking, and management of wood stoves. The Salt Spring Emergency Services, through Search and Rescue, are tasked with assisting elders with home heating and road access during storms, guided by POD leaders in each micro-district on the island.



Home Based Services Asset Map



Grocery Shopping 49%

Thrifty Foods offers a weekly food delivery service called Sendial. Seniors over 65 and those recovering from surgery can order groceries by phone. Volunteers record and put together orders, which are delivered by a Thrifty staff driver who will put groceries away when needed. Country Grocer also offers a service where pre-orders can be put together, though they do not deliver. Rather, seniors receive a \$5 voucher for taxi fare when picking up orders.

While outside the purview of Better at Home, it was helpful to learn that a variety of programs offering 'meals in company' allow seniors to both engage in friendly visiting and participate in community life. These included community meals at Seniors Services Society, All-Saints-by-the-Sea Anglican Church, Salt Spring Island Community Services and the Royal Canadian Legion. Meals on Wheels and private company Chef on the Run were also cited as helpful services that allowed seniors to retain their independence without becoming isolated.

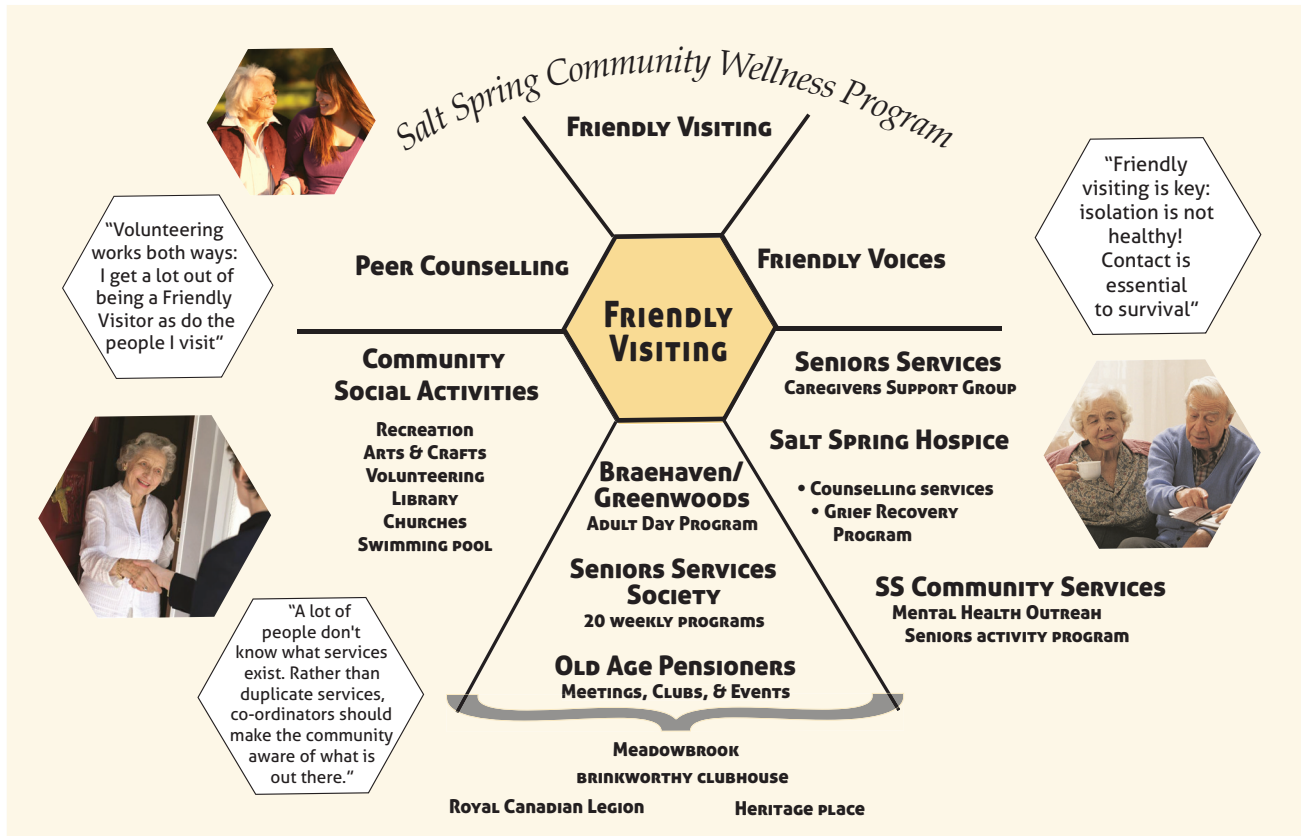


Grocery Shopping Asset Map (meal provision is not included in the Better at Home Basket of Services)

Friendly Visiting 44%

The Friendly Visiting program has been combined with a Peer Counselling and Friendly Voices program under the umbrella of the Community Wellness Program. This program, outlined in Appendix X, has been running for over two decades and engages 35 volunteers in bi-monthly visits, phone calls, and counselling sessions to combat isolation and provide support. Though this program is considered highly important, Friendly Visiting was not identified as a key need in our survey because many respondents perceived that community need was already being well taken care of.





Friendly Visiting Asset Map

During the Community Meeting, survey findings were correlated as follows:

Service	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Transportation	27	54
Friendly Visiting	13	26
Grocery Shopping	12	24
Housekeeping	14	28
Light Yard Work	6	12
Home Repair	4	8
Snow Shovelling	0	0

*Wood Chopping was added by 6 people, or 12% of respondents.



Once the needs and capacities of Better at Home became understood, we conveyed questions from potential lead agencies to the Better at Home coordinator. Further to this, we had follow up meetings with a group of key stakeholders; all self-selected out except Salt Spring Island Community Services, citing a lack of organizational capacity, willingness, and/or human resources.

Salt Spring Island Community Services is the major provider of social services on Salt Spring, with a wide range of programs from mental health to food security. They recently introduced a Seniors Activity Program, and have recognized the need to build capacity to address the growing population of seniors on Salt Spring. With 70 staff and 140 volunteers, Salt Spring Island Community Services is well positioned to meet the deliverables of the Better at Home program.

5. Recommendations and next steps

Many of these recommendations go beyond the scope of Better at Home, but are included since they were reported by seniors. Our hope in including these is that other organizations and governments will consider these recommendations as expert perspectives of island seniors, so they may be able to act responsively.

Transportation

Lack of transportation options is a major issue that Better at Home may be able to partially address. Below is what we heard:

- An expanded bus service would be very helpful for those seniors living in the north and south ends of the island; a Handy Dart service that extends service to seniors' place of residence was cited by many as ideal, if not necessarily immediately feasible.
- Greenwoods van, currently used for the Adult Day Program, could expand its geographic range by engaging a driver rather than relying on Day Program leaders to collect and drop-off participants. Additional transportation options for remote seniors and increasing accessibility of the existing Braehaven and Salt Spring Seniors Services Society social and 'daycare' programs would allow respite for caregivers.
- Lions transportation to appointments service is excellent but volunteer secession plan needs to be designed as the service currently relies on a single individual.
- Taxi service discounts and/ or Taxi Savers program provided for low income seniors
- Door to door accompaniment, including accompaniment throughout medical appointments, is essential for some seniors travelling alone.
- Transportation to social events could be accomplished with event venues (i.e. churches, theatres, community halls) and organizers co-developing a ride-share option. Attendees could indicate their need for a ride, or drivers could opt to give a senior from their neighbourhood a ride to the event (see Social Butterflies program, Victoria)
- Salt Spring Seniors Services Society driving program is excellent but there is a diminishing pool of volunteer drivers. Shoring up existing drivers pool through incentives, outreach and recruitment would allow the program to expand to provide transport to much-needed social visits and non-medial appointments.
- Seniors expressed a desire to be accompanied on shopping trips rather than simply rely on the existing Sendial phone-in service. The opportunity to get out of the house, find new and on-sale products, and socialize showed that a 'friendly visit' out of the home, which also allows for crucial errands, could accomplish multiple ends.



- Some existing transportation services are also underutilized. Better coordination of existing vehicles between agencies and engagement of drivers would allow vans to operate at fuller capacity.

Volunteer Engagement and Development

The volunteer base is aging and needing more services themselves, and organizations are increasingly unable to attract enough volunteers.

- Younger people, including younger seniors (55- 70) are less able or willing to volunteer in the same way, so the model of volunteering could shift from a focus on ongoing commitments to one-off events, team involvement or family efforts.
- Increased perks for volunteers could include: recognition in local media, appreciation events, certificates/milestone recognition, discounts at local stores, or tax incentives.
- Pools of locally trained volunteers, such as Salt Spring Hospice and Friendly Visitors could be integrated, allowing for better utilization of volunteers, less overlap in training and seamless service from the point of view of the service recipient.
- Increased volunteer recruitment: engaging interns, making better use of social media tools to communicate volunteer opportunities, promoting volunteerism through island businesses and schools.
- Volunteer training, with learning, skill development, fun and food built in may increase the volunteer pool.
- Board governance and organizations suffer when boards cannot replace members who would like to retire, do not actively recruit fresh members, and place unsustainable demands on their members. Increased local training focused on risk analysis, board/staff relations, and strategic decision making may increase board effectiveness by preparing a larger pool of potential board members.

Coordination and Point of Entry

Some seniors and/ or family members begin to engage with senior service providers at a time of transition or crisis and some have difficulty accessing services.

- A case manager/social worker/community coordinator would be very helpful for seniors and family members to learn what services are available, and chart an appropriate course of action.
- Challenges relating to referrals to private home support services and agencies offering seniors services could be addressed by: liability coverage for referring agencies, a harmonized system to vet service providers, communication between those needing services and those providing them.
- There is a need for dedicated, accessible space for one-on-one consultations, meetings, and storage of confidential files. Such space might be located at Salt Spring Seniors Society, Public Library/Literacy Centre, or in a private rented space that is accessible for senior drop-in.
- Emergency POD leaders could be engaged to deliver resource guides to isolated or vulnerable seniors.



- Establish a single 'hotline' as a single point for resource access.
- The publication, Health Related Services on Salt Spring, has been compiled by Sharon Glover of the Community Wellness Program (updated June 2013) and has been added to by the community developers in an effort to provide resources and contact information for seniors and those who care for them. This document (see Appendix) should be updated regularly and distributed widely.

Collaboration between senior service providers

- Increased sharing of knowledge of services between private, public and non profit sector providers through quarterly in-person meetings.
- Community Wellness Program could be expanded. The partnership, which has supported the Wellness Program involves contributions from Gulf Island Seniors Residence Association, Saltspring Seniors Society, Salt Spring Island Community Services and Lady Minto Hospital. The distributed model has been a way of ensuring co-operation, transparency and a maximization of resources in the community and should be continued.
- Another finding is that coordination of services and further integration is needed. For example, the Lions Hall offers a wheelchair van program but has only one driver; they could coordinate with Salt Spring Seniors Driver Program coordinator to recruit more volunteer van drivers.

Training and Human Resources

Many providers experience shortages in trained staff due to difficulty of retaining staff on an island with a high cost of living and lack of opportunities for professional development.

- Increased local training opportunities for RCA's would increase our overall capacity.
- Prohibitive cost for local training costs or need to travel off-island for affordable training were cited as barrier, so subsidies are needed for eligible workers.
- Increased respite and services for caregivers are needed, as the strain is enormous. Expanded day programs for seniors would be positive for both seniors and their caregivers.
- Peer to peer and professional mentorship of volunteers and private home care providers.
- Family members caring for seniors are a major human resource and they need increased respite, training and support services.



Appendix A

Documentation of Media Coverage

- Driftwood Newspaper, Article November 20th
- Sounds like Salt Spring Radio Show, Interview, November 24th
- Salt Spring Exchange, Ads and Postings promoting survey & community meeting
- Public Postering



Appendix B

Community Wellness Programs profile



The Community Wellness programs are noteworthy for multiple reasons. First as an excellent model of collaboration between four community partners, secondly as trusted and comprehensive resource provider and referral service, and third, the remarkable leadership of Sharon Glover.

Overview: The Salt Spring Island Community Wellness Programs are services designed to meet senior's needs and enhance their wellness. Services can be accessed by any senior, by community agencies referral or self referral. All services are at no charge to the senior and include consultation, referral and sharing of community health and social support information.

Structure: The programs are supported by the partnership of Salt Spring Island Community Services, Lady Minto Hospital, Gulf Islands Seniors Residence Association and Salt Spring Seniors Services Society. The programs are coordinated by a part time staff person.

Programs:

- Friendly Visitors Carefully selected friendly volunteers who visit weekly with seniors in their homes or on an excursion to offer companionship and brighten the day. Visits are individual, confidential and free.
- The Peer Connection Trained seniors who help support and encourage other seniors who may be going through a 'rough patch' in their lives. Meetings are held weekly, for about an hour, in the senior's home, or elsewhere if appropriate. Visits are confidential, individual and free.
- Friendly Voices Caring volunteers provide regular phone contact to seniors who need more social contact, or are alone or lonely. This program is not for medical concerns.
- Coordination of Screening Mammography, Arthritis Self-Management Programs and Blood Pressure clinic

Program Statistics (April 2012-March 2013)

- 1542 volunteer hours, not including transport to and from engagements
- 495 hours of direct visiting hours
- 686 hours of peer counselling
- 15 Friendly Visitors
- 20 Peer Counsellors
- 36 clients

During the Better at Home community engagement and research, the Community Wellness programs





Sharon Glover and Community Developer and GISRA Resident Mary Toynbee

and Sharon Glover were repeatedly named as the key resource for information, referral and services. These programs are trusted and depended upon by Salt Spring seniors.

The program takes a skilled and thoughtful approach to matching volunteers to new clients. Referrals are vetted through a committee comprised of volunteers, who combine long island experience with personal training to factor in gender, location, interests and particularities of clients in making matches with volunteers. Most volunteers involved with the Community Wellness program are seniors themselves, aged seventy plus. Volunteers are thoroughly trained and treated with great respect and consideration.

Sharon seeks a long-term commitment between client and volunteer, and nurtures those relationships. Friendly visitors are

friends with boundaries and friends with confidentiality. For the volunteer, it is a way of belonging to a great team and contributing significantly to another wellness. Friendships are fostered that last years, and are important to both client and volunteer.

Sharon Glover stepped down from this position in Dec 2013 after seventeen years of service. Her leadership and her outstanding dedication to this work are noteworthy. The community developers were deeply impressed with Sharon's skills and warm enthusiasm. In our research seniors and service providers repeatedly emphasised the invaluable contribution Sharon and these programs have made in their lives. Salt Spring Island has benefited from Sharon's compassionate and mindful leadership of the Community Wellness Program.





United Way

**Better
at Home**

United Way helping seniors
remain independent.

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